

**BOROUGH OF LAKEHURST
WORK SESSION/REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 20, 2017
MINUTES**

MEETING OPENED AT 7:30 P.M. BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT STEVEN OGLESBY.

ALL STOOD FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE.

PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT READ INTO RECORD BY MUNICIPAL CLERK DUGAN:

“IN COMPLIANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 10:4, OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, NOTICE WAS GIVEN TO TWO NEWSPAPERS, AND POSTED, THAT A WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL IS SCHEDULED FOR THE TWENTIETH DAY OF APRIL, 2017, WITH THE WORK SESSION TO BEGIN AT THE HOUR OF 7:30 P.M. AND THE REGULAR MEETING TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING AT THE LAKEHURST COMMUNITY CENTER, 207 CENTER STREET, LAKEHURST, NEW JERSEY, AT WHICH TIME, THE BUSINESS OF THE BOROUGH WILL BE CONDUCTED.”

ROLL CALL:

ROBIN BUSCH: ABSENT	PATRICIA HODGES: PRESENT
STEPHEN CHILDERS: PRESENT	GARY LOWE: PRESENT
JAMES DAVIS: ABSENT	STEVEN OGLESBY: PRESENT
MAYOR HARRY ROBBINS: ABSENT	

WORK SESSION:

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA:

Municipal Clerk Dugan reviewed regular meeting agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Time opened: 7:32 p.m.

NO PUBLIC COMMENTS

Time closed: 7:32 p.m.

Councilman Childers stated the public hearing on the 2017 Municipal Budget is scheduled for tonight with approval being received from the State to adopt.

Councilman Davis stated ground has been broken for the community garden at Public Works and added he will get together with Andrew Hodges concerning parameters for the garden which he will then bring to the Governing Body for review.

Council President Oglesby stated that Mayor Robbins had been called into work and is unable to attend tonight's council meeting.

Council President Oglesby stated that the issue with non-resident membership in the fire company will be discussed and added he hoped members of the council has a chance to review the justifications provided by the non-resident volunteers.

Councilman Childers stated the Mayor and members of the Public Safety committee met and recommended continuation of the fire academy training for the two members who had recently enrolled.

Councilwoman Hodges stated she had read all the letters and felt they were heartfelt in their willingness to remain as volunteers. Mrs. Hodges added she felt unsettled by the notice sent on April 7, 2017 concerning the inability of the fire company to provide the residents of the Borough with adequate fire protection due to the suspension of the non-resident members and the notice "felt like a threat."

Council President Oglesby stated the current ordinance is not a new ordinance but was adopted in 1988 and added the council "just became aware" the residency requirement.

Mr. Oglesby added there are two items of concern: the first being emergency responses from out of town and the second being the Borough would like to make sure the fire company is not taken over by "out of towners."

Mr. Oglesby further added a response from one mile or five minutes may be a possible solution.

Council President Oglesby stated the ordinance would need to be rewritten or adhered to. Mr. Oglesby suggested that all non-resident members be reinstated to a one year term so that corrective action may be taken on the ordinance.

Councilman Davis suggested a joint committee of first aid squad members, fire company members and emergency responders be formed to discuss the issue.

Borough Attorney Sean Gertner stated if it is the inclination of the council to reinstate the members, a motion and second should be made to add the reinstatement to the Consent Agenda.

Motion by: James Davis

Seconded by: Gary Lowe

To move the reinstatement of the non-resident members of the fire company to the Consent Agenda. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

Motion by: Stephen Childers

Seconded by: James Davis

To adopt Ordinance #17-02. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

Motion by: Patricia Hodges

Seconded by: James Davis

To approve on second reading and open the public hearing of Ordinance #2017-03 entitled: "ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF LAKEHURST, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, REAPPROPRIATING THE FUNDED APPROPRIATION BALANCES FOR OTHER CAPITAL PROJECTS." Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

Time opened: 7:45 p.m.

CFO Antonides stated the purpose of the ordinance is to fund landfill costs and Borough Hall improvements from an existing funding ordinance.

Dona Sinton, 501 Rose Street, asked about the decision to fund these projects.

Mr. Antonides replied the funding was needed for a landfill permit fee and Borough Hall improvements and added this is the public hearing on this funding ordinance. Mr. Antonides further added the fund must be used for projects.

Time closed: 7:48 p.m.

Motion by: James Davis

Seconded by: Stephen Childers

To adopt Ordinance #17-03. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2017 MUNICIPAL BUDGET:

Motion by: James Davis

Seconded by: Stephen Childers

To open public hearing on 2017 Municipal Budget. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

Time opened: 7:49 p.m.

Mr. Antonides stated the budget was introduced at the council meeting of March 16, 2017 and has been reviewed by the State of New Jersey and approved for adoption by the Council. Mr. Antonides added the budget is within the levy cap with a \$.02 increase on \$100 of assessed property value which represents a .0118% increase or \$32 increase for the average home.

Dona Sinton, 501 Rose Street, asked about the cap bank and offsetting of costs for the proposed water main project.

Mr. Antonides replied the State has a levy cap and appropriations cap which cannot fund the water main project which is funded by the utility fund and are separate.

Time closed: 7:53 p.m.

Motion by: Stephen Childers

Seconded by: Patricia Hodges

To close public hearing on 2017 Municipal Budget. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

ADOPTION OF 2017 MUNICIPAL BUDGET:

Motion by: Stephen Childers

Seconded by: James Davis

To approve resolution #17-074 adopting 2017 Municipal Budget. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative with the exception of Councilwoman Hodges who voted no on the line item for funding the fire department as "we have not received the audit which has been promised for two years." Mrs. Hodges stated she did appreciate the efforts of the finance committee with regard to the budget preparation.

COMMITTEE/COUNCIL REPORTS:

Councilman Lowe reports work has begun on camera installation at the impound lot.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC:

Time opened: 7:56 p.m.

Ed Seaman, 1941 Patterson Avenue, Whiting, New Jersey stated the fire company has lost several members who have joined Manchester, Ridgeway, and Whiting fire companies for the length of service awards program offered by Manchester Township.

Mr. Seaman added the fire company received the SAFER grant to entice members to stay with the Lakehurst fire company and added the grant has "helped with the response rate."

Mr. Seaman suggested the ordinance be amended to include Manchester residents such as First Aid Squad ordinance.

Mr. Seaman further added he sent the letter to the County as the suspension of the eight non-resident members could have affected responses.

Sue Barker, 409 Cedar Street, asked "who should be paying for" the fire company audit?

Councilwoman Hodges stated the audit "should be a routine part of financial management" of the fire company.

Discussion held on types of audit. Chief Financial Officer Antonides stated there are several different types of audit.

Mrs. Barker asked about code enforcement efforts and stated there are numerous vehicles at a residence at the corner of Pine and Lake Streets as well as a residence on Rose Street with a tarp on the roof.

Deputy Clerk Maryanne Capasso stated the property owners have been warned by the code enforcement officer.

Mrs. Barked stated she had read about the council's efforts to control the geese population at Lake Horicon and wondered if the proposed strobe light installation will "bother" the eagle.

Council President Oglesby stated the strobe lights will be installed six to eight inches off the water which shouldn't disturb the eagle.

Mike Sinton, 501 Rose Street, stated he received an email from the auditor which had been contacted to perform the fire company's audit.

Chief Financial Officer Antonides suggested discussing with the Governing Body which type of audit is requested.

Councilwoman Hodges stated she had been promised "some financial reckoning" for the past two years and believes she has been misled by the fire company.

Council President Oglesby stated that fire company has been asked for an accounting of taxpayer's funds as well as minutes and received none. Mr. Oglesby added "we have no proof or justification of what expenditures are." Mr. Oglesby further added the fire company has "not been cooperative or forthcoming."

Councilman Davis suggested forming a committee to "memorialize concerns" and then take "formal steps for a solution."

Mr. Sinton stated when the audit was first requested, it was tax season and the auditor was unable to perform the audit. Mr. Sinton stated the Federal government reviews every submission for the federal grants which were received.

Borough Attorney Sean Gertner stated the council has the right to ask for minutes by providing public funds to the fire company and therefore has the "power of the purse."

Council President Oglesby stated the council had be told by a member that the fire company didn't file tax returns and added if the Internal Revenue Service should decide the fire company is not a charitable organization, the council must insist on financial accountability for taxpayer funds. Mr. Oglesby further added "if you want us to fund you must provide accountability."

Mr. Sinton stated that it is the intention of the fire company to have an audit performed.

Councilwoman Hodges stated she doesn't "question what it takes to run a fire company" and added she has "full respect for the volunteers."

Chief Financial Officer Antonides stated the council will discuss the type of audit requested and will bring the request to you.

Sue Barker, 409 Cedar Street, suggested using the First Aid Squad standard for the audit.

Mr. Antonides stated the town is required to have an audit every year.

Borough Attorney Sean Gertner suggested waiting for the council's audit request.

Council President Oglesby stated the fire company and first aid squad are not treated equally with the first aid squad receiving half the amount of funding from the Borough as the fire company and added the first aid squad "buys its own ambulances."

Mr. Oglesby added "no meeting of an organization should be entirely in executive session."

Mark Sumner, 409 Willow Street, stated he had provided a financial spreadsheet of expenditures.

Dona Sinton, 501 Rose Street, stated there "seems to be a lot of mistrust."

Council President Oglesby stated the fire company will be given a "reasonable amount of time" to provide the audit after the request is received from the council.

Time closed: 8:23 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by: Stephen Childers

Seconded by: James Davis

To adjourn meeting. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative. Time: 8:24 p.m.

Bernadette Dugan, RMC/CPM
Municipal Clerk